



## MOHS Awards \$225,000 Grant to Jackson County Sheriff's Office

*Funds will be used for disaster preparedness*

**PASCAGOULA, Miss.** (April 2, 2012) – The Jackson County Sheriff's Office has been awarded a \$225,000 port security grant for new equipment purchases and upgrades. The grant is presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Among the items that will be purchased with the funds are new equipment for dive teams, interoperable communication equipment to ensure that communications are available to all areas of the port in the event of an emergency, a multi-purpose vehicle, high frequency sonar, and thermal intensification systems used to view images during nighttime operations. Specialized marine enforcement training and marine vessel upgrades are also planned.

"The Port of Pascagoula is the largest port in the State of Mississippi and without this funding, the task for the Jackson County Sheriff's Office of securing the safety of the port's assets and personnel would almost be impossible," said Lt. Bryan Cooper, Grants Coordinator at Jackson County Sheriff's Office. "Through these funds, equipment and valuable training will be utilized by the marine units to maintain safety, security, and interoperability between law enforcement and the industries that utilize the Port. The Jackson County Sheriff's Office will continue well into the future by taking this important task of securing the port with the utmost diligence."

The grant is part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local and community levels. It also seeks to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents.

"Ports are considered to be more vulnerable to terrorist attacks because of the amount of cargo that passes through them and the difficulty involved in protecting such a large area," said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. "Taking proactive measures to prevent terrorist attacks or damage from natural disasters ensure that they will continue to play a vital role in the well-being of both the statewide and coastal economies."

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2011 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to [www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov)

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